

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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ACTION

October 6, 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Henry A. Kissinger

SUBJECT: Aerial Reconnaissance of North Korea

At the 303 Committee meeting on June 17, 1969, consideration was given to a JCS proposal to fly four to six SR-71 overflights of North Korea monthly subject to 303 Committee approval each month. On June 20th you specifically approved two initial SR-71 overflights of North Korea.

The two initial flights and a third authorized by the 303 Committee in early August produced considerable significant intelligence not before available. There was no known North Korean reaction to these overflights. Approval for additional SR-71 overflights has been withheld by the Committee during the current negotiations with the North Koreans for release of the captured U.S. three-man helicopter crew.

The helicopter crew have now been in North Korean hands for approximately six weeks, and negotiations for their release still seem to be making no progress.

The Department of Defense and CIA would like to resume SR-71 overflights of North Korea on an approximately once a month basis subject to review of intelligence requirements and mission by mission approval of the 303 Committee.

The Department of State believes resumption of these missions may jeopardize negotiations for the release of the three prisoners and recommends a continued indefinite SR-71 stand-down pending their outcome.

Mr. Mitchell and I agree with Messrs. Packard and Helms that the North Koreans will probably release the prisoners only when it suits their purposes to do so and that an SR-71 overflight at this time will have little or no direct impact on their decision.

NSC
REVIEW
COMPLETE
D, 10/31/03

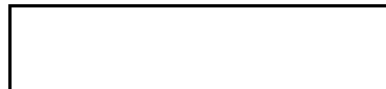
JCS review(s) completed.

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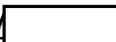
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RECOMMENDATION:

That you approve resumption of SR-71 overflights of North Korea during the month of October 1969 and approximately once monthly thereafter subject to mission by mission approval of the 303 Committee.

10/8/69

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